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ABSTRACT

Insight into both the employee and employer aspects of the Mexican American migrant farm workers was the basis for this study. The objectives were (1) to collect sociological profile data; (2) to determine and analyze the wage earnings and fringe benefits of these migrants; (3) to secure migrant opinion about housing and employment; (4) to analyze the educational progress of migrant children; and (5) to determine growers' views about the role of migrant laborers in the ccmmunity and in the grower's farming operation. The data, collected through personal interviews with 69 migrant workers and their 29 employers, indicated that migrant interviewees did not consider themselves to be in poverty and were reasonably well satisfied with the earnings, housing, fringe benefits, working conditions, and government services available to them in Ohio. Also, while migrant children have received considerably more education than their parents, more than 50% of those in school were more than 1 year behind their grade level. In interviews, growers admitted that if wage rates increase significantly above current levels, there will likely be increased mechanical harvesting and a considerable decrease in migrant employment. (HBC)

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Migrant Farm Workers in Northwestern Ohio

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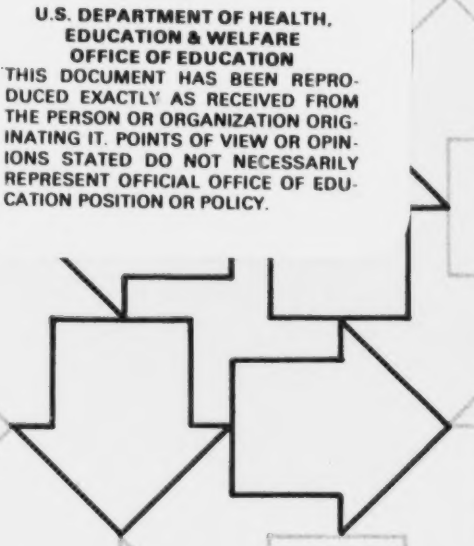

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MIGRANT FARM WORKERS IN NORTHWESTERN OHIO

by

James D. Howell, Bernard L. Erven, and John S. Bottum[1/]

INTRODUCTION

More than 30,000 Spanish-American or Chicano migrant farm laborers come to Ohio each year to work with specialized field crops. While some come as early as March, the highest concentration of workers is during mid and late summer for the harvest of Ohio's varied field vegetable crops.

With present technology, producers of processing tomatoes, cucumbers for processing, sugar beets, and most other field vegetable crops are generally dependent upon seasonal workers. Within the last 4 years, however, additional mechanization of several of these crops has become an increasingly used alternative to the employment of large numbers of migrant laborers. Growers now can decide between these two alternatives.

Interest in migrant farm workers is not limited to producers of agricultural products. Religious, civic, and governmental organizations have shown increasing concern and interest in the migrants' economic and social welfare. The mass media have given wide coverage to the socio-economic conditions of migrants. Some claim migrant farm workers are well paid and have equal access to education, employment, and public services. Others claim the opposite. Amid the claims and counter claims relating to the migrants' economic and social welfare, there remains a dearth of factual information upon which to resolve differences of opinion.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This exploratory study of migrant farm workers was conducted to gain insight into both the employee and employer aspects of the migrant situation. The study was designed to provide information relative to often raised questions about migrant farm laborers in Ohio.

More specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1) Collect sociological profile data relating to age, education and training, family size and residence, work experience, religion, and health of a sample of migrant farm workers in Ohio.

2) Determine and analyze the wage earnings and fringe benefits of these migrants.

3) Secure migrant opinion about housing, employment opportunities,

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sufficiency of earnings, future employment, interest in living year around in Ohio, reasons for coming to Ohio, treatment by employers, and the future of migrant work.

4) Analyze the educational progress of migrant children and parents' attitudes toward their children's education.

5) Determine growers' views about the role of migrant laborers in the local community and in the grower's farming operation.

PROCEDURE

The data were collected through personal interviews with 69 migrant workers who were heads of family and their 29 grower employers. Both structured and open ended questions were asked. The migrant interviews were conducted in September 1969, the peak migrant employment period. The employer interviews were conducted in January 1970. Sandusky and Putnam counties in northwestern Ohio were selected for the study. They rank first and second in the employment of migrant labor in the state.

The county agricultural extension agents in the counties surveyed were knowledgeable concerning specialty crop production. There were 429 growers known to the agents, 104 in Sandusky County and 325 in Putnam County. The county agent in each county selected 23 growers he considered typical of those growers employing migrant workers. Thirty-two growers, 15 in Sandusky County and 17 in Putnam County, were contacted. Fourteen were not contacted because they were either not at home when the interviewer was in their area, or were not contacted due to lack of interview time. The purpose of the study was explained to the growers and permission was solicited to interview a sample of their migrant employees. Twenty-nine of the 32 growers agreed to cooperate in the study. This sampling procedure may have resulted in some biasing of the sample toward growers relatively well known to the agents.

Thirty-four heads of family were interviewed in Sandusky County and 35 in Putnam County. The interviewer was fluent in Spanish. All but three of the 69 interviews were in Spanish. The number of migrants intervewed on each farm was proportionate to the total number of migrant heads of family working for the employer. The following guideline was used:

Number of Migrant Families Employed	Number of Heads of Family Interviewed
1 - 4	1
5 - 9	2
10 - 14	3
15 - 19	4
20 or more	5

SOCIOLOGICAL PROFILE DATA OF MIGRANTS

Age Distribution and Marital Status

Of the 69 migrant heads of household, 32 percent were less than 35 years old, 52 percent were from 35 to 54, and 16 percent were 55 years old or older (Table 1). Eighty-nine percent of the heads of household were married, 10 percent were single, and 1 percent were widowed. All were males.

Education and Training

The migrant heads of household studied had little formal education (Table 2). Of the 69 interviewed, 23.3 percent had not completed the first grade and 48 percent had not completed the fourth grade. Approximately 10 percent had completed eight or more grades, and only one had completed high school. However, 56 heads of household said they would like additional training to prepare themselves for other types of work. Eighteen of these 56 indicated a major interest in mechanics work of various types; an additional 14 indicated a major interest in carpentry training. Other types of training mentioned were plumbing, truck driving, janitoring, welding, migrant crew leading, construction work, automobile body shop work, painting, baking, farming, and learning English.

Family Size and Residence

The migrants had relatively large families (Table 3). Seven percent of the families had 10 or more children who were still living at home with their parents, 22 percent had eight or more, and 56 percent had five or more. The family heads themselves came from large families as 56 percent had six or more brothers and sisters.

TABLE 1.--Age Distribution, 69 Migrant Heads of Household, Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, September 1969.

Age Range	Number	Percentage Distribution
14 - 17	1	1.4
18 - 24	7	10.2
25 - 34	14	20.3
35 - 44	18	26.1
45 - 54	18	26.1
55 - 64	8	11.6
65 and more	3	4.3
Total	69	100.0

TABLE 2.--Last Year of School Completed, 69 Migrant Heads of Household, Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, September 1969.

Last Year of School Completed	Number	Percentage Distribution	Cumulative Percentage
0	16	23.3	
1	3	4.3	27.6
2	5	7.2	34.8
3	9	13.1	47.9
4	11	16.0	63.9
5	5	7.2	71.1
6	10	14.5	85.6
7	2	2.9	88.5
8	4	5.8	94.3
9	3	4.3	98.6
12	1	1.4	100.0
Total	69	100.0	xxx

TABLE 3.--Number of Children Living At Home, 69 Migrant Families, Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, September 1969.

Number of Children at Home	Number of Families	Percentage Distribution
0	4	5.8
1	7	10.2
2	3	4.3
3	5	7.2
4	7	10.2
5	11	16.0
6	8	11.6
7	5	7.2
8	4	5.8
9	6	8.7
10	4	5.8
11 and more	1	1.4
Unmarried Migrant	4	5.8
Total	69	100.0

Fifty-eight of the 69 migrant families thought of the Rio Grande Valley of Texas as home. Five were from other parts of Texas and six were from other states.

Work Experience

All of the heads of household in the sample were doing farm work at the time of the interview. Forty-four percent said they did only farm work during the year. Thirty percent did both farm and non-farm work while outside Ohio. However, while in Ohio these 30 percent did only farm work. Sixteen percent did farm work only in Ohio and non-farm work only while not in Ohio. The remaining 10 percent did some non-farm work in Ohio.

Most of the heads of household had been migrants for several years (Table 4). Only 29 percent had been migrants for less than 5 years. Thirty-one percent had been doing migrant work for 15 years or more. Forty percent of the migrants interviewed had parents who had worked as migrants.

Most of the migrants had worked some seasons in states other than Ohio. Forty-six percent of the migrant heads of household had been coming to Ohio for less than 4 years. Only 13 percent had come for 8 years or more (Table 5). However, more than 90 percent planned to return in 1970. Of the five who did not plan to return in 1970, four were in their first year in Ohio.

Religion

The migrants had a low level of participation in religious activities while in Ohio. Fifty-five percent of those interviewed had not attended any formal religious services during the 8 weeks preceding the interview. Only 10 percent had attended five or more times during the 8 weeks. However, 96 percent stated that they were active participants in religious activities in their home areas. Ninety-seven percent of those interviewed were Roman Catholics.

TABLE 4.--Number of Years Employed As Migrant Farm Workers, 69 Heads of Household, Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, September 1969.

Years	Number	Percentage Distribution
1 - 4	20	29
5 - 9	20	29
10 - 14	8	11
15 - 19	10	15
20 and more	11	16
Total	69	100

TABLE 5.--Number of Years Employed in Ohio As Migrant Farm Workers, 69 Heads of Household, Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, September 1969.

Years	Number	Percentage Distribution
1 - 3	32	46
4 - 7	28	41
8 - 11	6	9
12 and more	3	4
Total	69	100

Health

The migrants had many health problems. All of those interviewed knew of the existence of the migrant health clinics. Fifty-four percent said they or a member of their family had used the services of the clinic in their area. An even higher percentage, 64 percent, saw a physician during their stay in Ohio. Incidence of hospital care was high. Twenty-two percent of those interviewed said they or members of their families had been hospitalized during the 1969 migrant season.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRODUCTION UNITS

The 29 production units (farms) included in the study ranged in size from 150 to 640 acres, with an average of 380 acres. All farms raised both tomatoes and sugar beets. Tomato acreages ranged from 11 to 200 acres with an average of 61 acres. Sugar beet acreages ranged from 15 to 217 acres with an average of 68 acres. Twenty-three of the 29 produced cucumbers for pickles. Their cucumber acreage ranged from 6 to 80 acres and averaged 29 acres. Four produced some cabbage. One produced strawberries and 1 sorghum for syrup.

All 29 growers interviewed employed migrants for seasonal work. Fifty-two percent employed non-migrants for seasonal work. Only 14 percent employed regular year-around hired labor. The average total hired labor bill for the 23 growers who had the information available was $23,564. The range was from less than $3,000 to more than $70,000.

MIGRANT WAGES AND FRINGE BENEFITS

Measuring migrant wages and fringe benefits was complex and difficult. Wages were paid on many different bases. For example, migrants were usually paid on a piece rate basis when picking tomatoes or when blocking and thinning sugar beets, on an hourly wage basis when setting tomatoes or doing general farm labor, and on a percent-of-the-crop basis when working with cucumbers for pickles. Fringe benefits varied substantially in both quality and quantity. Few migrant

families kept detailed records of their earnings. Thus, it was difficult for them to recall what the family had earned during 1969. The problem of recall was compounded by the wide variation in weekly earnings.

Another problem the migrants faced in giving accurate responses to questions of wages earned was the timing of the interview. Interviews with migrant heads of family were conducted throughout September 1969. Respondents were asked what they expected to earn in Ohio for the entire 1969 season. While some of the interviews were conducted less than a week before the respondents left Ohio, other interviews were conducted 2 to 4 weeks before their departure. As a result, some migrants had to estimate what they would earn from the time of their interview until the end of the season.

Another problem encountered in obtaining data from respondents was varying concepts as to what actually constituted earnings. Some of the heads of household initially responded with answers which reflected that they may have been thinking of earnings after out-of-pocket living expenses, or earnings after food expenditures, or earnings set aside to take back to their home area. Frequently, money which had not yet been received from employers, either unpaid wages or a transportation allowance, was not thought of as earnings. The interviewer in all cases endeavored to extend the respondents' thinking to include all earnings received for the period in question.

The fact that the interviewer was an "outsider" may have resulted in some respondents electing not to completely divulge factual personal financial information. However, the interviewer's Spanish fluency and assurances that all data were confidential reduced the severity of the problem.

Some problems were also encountered in obtaining data concerning migrant earnings from grower records. In some cases the records were not available or were incomplete at the time of the grower interview. In other cases the grower's overall migrant records were complete, but data concerning individual families were not available. In these situations the growers were asked to estimate their wage payments.

Although these complications made it difficult to estimate migrant wages, the authors feel that these problems were minimized as much as possible in this study. Consequently, the wage data are as good as is possible to obtain without substantial additional record keeping by the growers or interviews with the migrants several different times during the same year.

Migrant Farm Wages in Ohio

Two sources of data were used in making estimates of migrant farm wages. They were: 1) interviews with the employers in January 1970, and 2) interviews with migrant heads of household during the previous tomato harvest season.

Grower-employers were asked for total farm wages paid, number of weeks employed, and average number of adult equivalent workers for each of the surveyed 69 families. Each migrant head of household was asked for both farm and non-farm earnings for his family for the previous year. The farm earnings data obtained from the migrant heads of household were usually in the form of total earnings per family per crop per grower.

Growers had complete records for 24 or 35 percent of the migrant families surveyed. Each of the 24 families worked for a single grower during the time period under consideration. The grower-employer of each of these 24 families had a complete record of wages paid to the individual migrant family surveyed. The first of four wage estimates, A, is from these records. The grower-employers of the remaining migrant families had less detailed earnings information available. Some growers had complete information for their migrant employees as a group, but not on an individual family basis. Other growers had only partial records on wages paid to the individual families in the study. Thus, some grower estimation of payroll information was necessary for these migrant families. The second wage estimate, B, is based on information from both those who had complete information and those who had to make some estimates. Estimate B is based on information from employers of 93 percent of the families surveyed. Wage information from employers of 7 percent of the migrant families was not available at the time of the interview.

A third wage estimate, C, is based on personal interviews with 97 percent of the 69 migrant heads of household. Estimate C is calculated on reported farm wage earnings while employed by the migrant's employer at the time of the survey. Two migrant families did not respond to this question. A fourth estimate, D, was made to facilitate comparison with estimate A. Estimate D is based on migrant personal interview information from the same 24 (35 percent) migrant families whose employers had complete individual family wage records. Stated another way, estimates A and D are for the same sub-group of migrants.

The following definitions and wage estimates cover only migrant farm wage earnings while employed by their employer at the time of the survey. The number of weeks employed and the average number of adult equivalent workers likewise correspond to this time period. For most migrant families this covers the time they were employed as farm workers in Ohio. Only 7 percent of those interviewed were employed by more than one Ohio grower.

The following definitions were used in the estimation of farm wages earned in Ohio while employed by a single grower:

An adult equivalent was a person 15 years or older employed full-time. Such a person employed half time was considered one-half adult equivalent. A teenager employed after school each day and on weekends was considered one-third adult equivalent.

An adult equivalent week was an adult equivalent employed 1 week.

Average total farm wages per family in Ohio was total farm wages received by the migrant families under consideration divided by the total corresponding number of families.

Average number of adult equivalent workers per family was the total number of adult equivalent workers for all families under consideration divided by the total corresponding number of families.

Average number of weeks employed per family was the total number of weeks employed by all families under consideration divided by the total corresponding number of families.

Average wages per family per week was the average total farm wages per family in Ohio divided by the average number of weeks employed per family.

Average total wages per adult equivalent was total farm wages received by migrant families under consideration divided by the total number of adult equivalents for all corresponding families.

Average weekly wages per adult equivalent was total farm wages received by migrant families under consideration divided by the total number of adult equivalent weeks for all corresponding families.

For purposes of this study, farm wages include: wages paid by the hour, by piece rate, by contract, and by percent of crop; cash advances made to workers; transportation figured at 1 cent per mile per worker from home area or last place of employment to Ohio; and bonuses or wages withheld until the end of the season. Where the migrant employee did trucking for the grower and used his own vehicle, half of the receipts were considered wages. The balance was considered a return on the owner's investment.

Wage estimate A is for 35 percent of the migrant families and is based on data from growers with detailed individual family wage records. The average total farm wages per family were $2,863 for these families for the 10.4 weeks they were employed (Table 6).2/ This resulted in average farm wages per family per week of $276 for the season. The average number of adult equivalent workers was 3.3 per family. Average total farm wages on an adult equivalent per season basis were $878. Farm wages per adult equivalent worker per week ranged from $41 to $196 for this estimate. The low 25 percent of the workers earned a seasonal weekly average of $61 or less, while the high 25 percent earned $92 or more per week. The average of all adult equivalent workers included in this estimate was $82 per week.

Wage estimate B is based on data obtained from employers of the 93 percent of the 69 families for whom data were available. This estimate of average total farm wages per family was $3,171. The average number of weeks employed was 13.4. This resulted in an average farm wages of $236 per family per week while in Ohio with the grower interviewed. The average number of adult equivalent per family was 3.0. Farm wages on an adult equivalent worker basis were $1,060 per season. Farm wages per adult equivalent worker per week ranged from $26 to $295 for this estimate. The low 25 percent of the workers earned a seasonal weekly average of $55 or less, while the high 25 percent earned $107 or more per week. The average of all adult equivalent workers included in this estimate was $80 per week.

2/ For more detail concerning this and other wage estimates see Appendix A.

TABLE 6.--Migrant Farm Wages, Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, 1969.

Item	Wage Estimates*			
	A	B	C	D
Average total farm wages per family in Ohio	$2,862.96	$3,170.75	$1,856.27	$1,934.58
Average number of adult equivalent workers per family	3.26	2.99	2.91	3.26
Average number of weeks employed per family	10.38	13.42	13.73	10.38
Average wages per family per week	$275.82	$ 236.27	$135.20	$188.28
Average total wages per adult equivalent worker	878.20	1,060.45	637.89	593.42
Average weekly wages per adult equivalent worker	82.48	79.71	47.27	55.74

*Wage estimates A and B are based on data from employer interviews and estimate C and D on data from migrant interviews. Estimate A is from records of those employers who had complete data for individual migrant families. These records were available for 35 percent of the migrants surveyed. Estimate D is from interviews with the 35 percent of the migrants whose employers had the complete data. Estimates B and C are based on all available growers and migrant data, respectively. See Appendix for the standard deviations of the above data.

Wage estimate C is based on data obtained from migrants during the September 1969 interviews. Wage data were obtained from the 97 percent of the 69 heads of household. The average total farm wages per family were $1,856 for these families. Data relating to the number of weeks employed and the number of adult equivalent workers per family were not obtained from the migrant interviews. The weeks employed and number of adult equivalent workers were obtained from the growers. Using these estimates the average total wages per family per week were $135. These families were employed an average of 13.7 weeks. They had an average of 2.9 adult equivalent workers per family. Average total farm wages on an adult equivalent worker per season basis were $638. Farm wages per adult equivalent worker per week ranged from $6 to $438 for this estimate. The low 25 percent of the workers earned a seasonal weekly average of $23 or less, while the high 25 percent earned $51 or more per week. The average of all adult equivalent workers included in this estimate was $47 per week.

Wage estimate D is based on interviews with 35 percent of the migrants. This estimate of average total farm wages per family was $1,935. Since these families were the same sub-group as reported in estimate A, the number of weeks employed per family and the average number of adult equivalent workers are, respectively, 10.4 and 3.3. For this estimate, average farm wages per family per week were $188. Farm wages on an adult equivalent worker basis were $593 per season. Farm wages per adult equivalent worker per week ranged from $14 to $323 for this estimate. The low 25 percent of the workers earned a seasonal weekly average of $34 or less, while the high 25 percent earned $72 or more per week. The average of all adult equivalent workers included in this estimate was $56 per week.

The dispersion between the estimates based on migrant interview data and those based on grower data is of concern. It is not particularly surprising considering the discussion at the beginning of this section. Some specific reasons which help explain the variation in wage estimates are: 1) most migrant families did not have detailed records of their earnings; 2) their earnings varied widely from week to week; 3) as a result of the timing of the interviews, the migrants earnings estimates were based in part on what they expected to earn during the remainder of the harvest season; 4) they may have had difficulty in conceptualizing what wage earnings the interviewer was asking for; and 5) some migrants may have elected not to divulge factual personal financial information to the interviewer.

Additional Considerations Related to Migrant Farm Wages

For those not closely associated with specialized field crops in Sandusky and Putnam counties, it should be recognized that production per acre of tomatoes was considerably below average in 1969.3/ It should also be noted that migrant employment in these two counties is dependent to a large extent upon processing tomatoes. Migrants are paid on a piece-rate basis when harvesting

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3/ Yields per acre of processing tomatoes for 1967, 1968, 1969, and 1970 were 19.4 tons/acre, 20.3 tons/acre, 16.3 tons/acre and 20.6 tons/acre, respectively. Ohio Agricultural Statistics Annual Reports, Ohio Crop Reporting Service, Columbus, Ohio, for 1968, 1969, 1970.

tomatoes. Therefore, low tomato yields in 1969 were closely associated with lower than normal earnings for migrants in that year.

Farm wages earned per week per adult equivalent migrant worker for the season compared favorably with earnings of other farm workers in Ohio. Ohio farm workers with housing provided earned an average of $56.08 per week based on monthly data reported for October 1, 1969.4/

In comparing migrant farm wage earnings with alternative sources of employment earnings, it should be recognized that wages per family are probably a more appropriate basis of comparison than wages per worker. This becomes clearer when considering the composition of the typical migrant family. As pointed out previously, the average family had about 3 adult equivalent workers. The modal migrant family had 5 children living with the parents. Sixty-four percent of these children were less than 15 years of age and 91 percent were less than 20. Most of these children were either in school or had dropped out of school before completing the ninth grade. Thus, if the average migrant family surveyed were to move from farm to non-farm employment, there would likely be a reduction in the number of family members employed.

Other Wage Earnings

Ten percent of the migrant heads of family interviewed reported having done some non-farm work while in Ohio in 1969. Most of them worked in tomato processing plants. These non-farm earnings, as reported in the migrant interviews, ranged from $280 to $1,800, with a median of $600.

Nearly all of the 69 heads of household interviewed reported having done some work outside of Ohio. Several different kinds of jobs were reported, but farm work, carpentry, and construction were most common. Wages earned outside of Ohio ranged from less than $200 for some families to more than $5,000 for others. The average was slightly less than $2,000.

Fringe Benefits to Migrant Workers

Most employers provided housing and utilities at no cost to migrants and provided Social Security and Workmen's Compensation coverage. Eighty-three percent of the growers provided bottled gas for their laborers, 55 percent provided heating facilities, 100 percent provided housing and electricity, 87 percent paid Social Security, 83 percent paid Workmen's Compensation, 76 percent paid transportation costs either to or from Ohio, and 14 percent provided a telephone in the migrant camp. Migrant laborers received these benefits and income in kind. While the importance of these items was recognized, it was beyond the scope of the study to determine the actual value of the benefits and income in kind for all 69 heads of household.

4/ Converted from a base of $282 per month with housing provided. See Farm Labor, October 1970, Crop Reporting Board, Statistical Reporting Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture, p. 8.

TABLE 7.--Case Study of Non-Wage Costs of Labor to Grower on a Per Worker Basis, Sandusky County, Ohio, September 1969.

Type of Expenses	Amount per Worker per Season	Percentage Distribution
Basic housing and appliance facilities*	$31.00	24
Electricity	7.20	6
Bottled gas for cooking and heating	25.00	20
Social Security+	37.25	29
Workmen's Compensation**	9.16	7
Miscellaneous++	17.50	14
Total	$127.11	100

*Based on actual figures of housing constructed within the previous 2 years, and assumed housing life to be 10 years without major repair.

+Based on wage earnings of $776.00 per worker per season in Ohio at the rate of 4.8 percent.

**Based on $776.00 earnings at 1.18 percent.

++Includes such items as cost of minor repair to housing and appliances, trash hauling costs, sanitation costs, and cost of money loaned to workers.

However, a case study is included to illustrate the costs and benefits on a per-worker-per-season basis for one of the larger growers whose housing facilities the authors judged to be better than average. The basic costs included in the case study are for housing, major appliances, electricity, bottled gas for cooking and heating, housing and appliance maintenance, waste disposal facilities, Social Security payments, and Workmen's Compensation coverage (Table 7). Total grower costs and laborer non-wage benefits in this case study were equivalent to 16.4 percent of wage earnings.

Other Fringe Benefits Desired

The 69 heads of household were asked if there were additional benefits which they felt their employers should have provided. Most felt that sufficient fringe benefits were provided. However, 16 percent wanted life and/or health insurance coverage, 9 percent wanted higher wages, 9 percent wanted better housing, 7 percent said bottled gas for cooking should have been provided, and 6 percent said they needed more money for transportation to Ohio. Other benefits desired but mentioned with a lesser frequency were a more adequate water supply, the payment of all wages to the migrant as the work is performed, and better working relationships with the grower.

MIGRANT RESPONSES TO OPINION AND ATTITUDINAL QUESTIONS

Housing

The majority of the migrants felt that housing provided for them was satisfactory. Twenty-six percent considered their housing to be very good, 65 percent considered it adequate, and 9 percent felt it was inadequate. Twelve percent stated that the housing was too small, 6 percent mentioned that the sanitary facilities provided were inadequate, 6 percent reported that the available water was unusable due to the high sulfur content, and 3 percent stated that their cooking and heating facilities were inadequate. Mentioned at least once by a head of household were the following problems: unrepaired windows, lack of gas for cooking, leaky roof, lack of water, and no hot water available.

Community Services

Nearly all 69 migrant heads of household interviewed had been helped personally or knew of others who had been helped while in Ohio by one or more government or community groups. Fifty-four percent had been personally helped and an additional 45 percent, although not personally helped, knew of others who had been helped. Twenty-one percent reported that the migrant health clinics had been of most help, 16 percent reported that the Federal Government's Food Stamp Program had been of most help, and 12 percent mentioned church groups as being of most help.

When asked if other benefits of this nature were needed, 10 percent wanted a guaranteed year around job and 9 percent wanted access to improved health services. Other desired benefits mentioned with less frequency were: a welfare system more responsive to short-term needs, a guaranteed minimum income, opportunity for training for another type of work, more help in the education of migrant children, opportunity for those under 16 to be allowed to work in the fields until the end of the migrant season, churches which are more interested in migrants, more organized recreational opportunities for migrant children, and

more unionization of migrant workers.

Migrant-Grower Relations

Six percent of the migrant heads of household said they had excellent relations with their employers in Ohio. Eighty-two percent said their relations were good, 10 percent said fair, and 2 percent said poor.

Sufficiency of Earnings

When asked about the sufficiency of their earnings, 36 percent of the heads of household interviewed responded that their income was adequate for their needs, but 12 percent said their income was definitely insufficient. Forty-six percent replied with statements that indicated a position between the above two. "Just enough to get by on," "only enough to get by on," and "just barely adequate" were common responses for this group.

Reasons for Coming to Ohio

When asked why they came to Ohio to do agricultural field work, 94 percent responded with the economic reasons of either "good wages" or "plenty of work available."

Employment Opportunities

Twenty-nine percent of those interviewed reported they could not find regular year around employment in their home area, and an additional 25 percent said it would be very difficult. Forty-six percent, however, reported they could find year around employment in their home area. More than half of these respondents indicated that the year around employment would be farm work. Other opportunities mentioned by a much smaller number of respondents were carpentry, construction work, highway maintenance, factory work, slaughter house work, mechanics, service station work, small retail store work, and truck driving. The heads of household felt they could earn an average of $1.47 per hour in regular year around employment in their home area. This would be $58.80 for a 40 hour work week.

Length of Time Likely to Remain in Migrant Stream

Fifty-one percent reported they planned to continue to work as migrants as long as work was available. An additional 8 percent said they would work as migrants for the rest of their lives. Nineteen percent said they would continue as migrants only until they could get a better job. Twenty-two percent said they had decided to continue for only a very few more years. More than 75 percent had no idea of what type of work they would have if they could not continue as migrants.

Interest in Living Year Around in Ohio

About one-third of the migrants interviewed expressed some interest in settling out or living the year around in Ohio. Seven percent of those interviewed said they had strongly considered living the entire year in Ohio, 25 percent said they had thought about it from time to time, and 68 percent said they had never seriously considered the matter.

Many reasons were given for not having settled out. Twenty-eight percent mentioned lack of opportunity for steady employment in Ohio, 25 percent mentioned responsiblity to relatives in Texas, and 19 percent mentioned climate. Other reasons given with less frequency were: the higher cost of living in Ohio as compared to Texas, the reluctance of part of the family to move, and the obligations involved in their buying a house in Texas.

Migrants were asked the level of wages they would have to be paid to stay in Ohio, assuming steady year-around employment. The answers ranged from $1.30 to $5.00 an hour, with an average of $2.77 an hour. This would become $110.80 for a 40 hour week.

Future of Migrant Work

The migrants were asked what they thought the future held for them and their fellow workers. Fifty-one percent of the migrants felt that machines would replace them within the next 2 to 6 years. Nineteen percent thought their opportunities for migrant work would remain about the same. Six percent felt their wages would probably increase, while 6 percent felt their economic situation would get worse. Three percent felt that their work would disappear as unionization increased, and 2 percent felt things would improve with unionization. Thirteen percent said they really didn't know what the future held.

THE EDUCATION OF MIGRANT CHILDREN[5/]

Age Distribution of Migrant Children

Nine percent of those still considered as part of the family were 20 years of age or older. Twenty-seven percent were in the 15 through 19 year age bracket, and 64 percent were less than 15 years of age (Table 8).

Education of Migrant Children

The migrant heads of household who were interviewed had 257 dependent children age 5 or over who had attended school but had not graduated from high school. Of these 257 children, 204 were in school or planning to enroll during the current year. Fifty-two percent of the children ages 6 through 15 were enrolled in an Ohio school at the time of the survey. Another 44 percent planned to enroll in school in their home area at the end of the migrant season. All of those enrolled in an Ohio school also planned to enroll in school upon their return to their home area. Thus, 96 percent of the 6 through 15 year olds either were or were planning to be enrolled in school during the current school year.

Although only 20 percent of the 257 children had quit school, 52 percent of those still in school were not "on track" (within one grade or in the grade normally expected for their age) (Table 9). Evidently the moving from state to state, frequent changes in schools, and emphasis on working in the fields during some parts of the year make it difficult for students to stay "on track."

5/ Parts of this information were previously reported in Education for Migrant Children, by Bernard L. Erven and James D. Howell, Economic Information for Ohio Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, Ohio Cooperative Extension Serivce, June 1971.

TABLE 8.--Age Distribution, 326 Migrant Children,* Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, September 1969.

Age	Sex		Total	Percent of Total
	Male	Female		
Birth - 4	16	29	45	14
5 - 9	32	35	67	21
10 - 14	45	49	94	29
15 - 19	54	35	89	27
20 - 24	14	13	27	8
25 and over	1	3	4	1
Total	162	164	326	100%

*Members of migrant families, excluding wives, for whom head of household was responsible.

TABLE 9.--Number of Children in School "On Track" and Grades Behind, By Age, Putnam and Sandusky Counties, Ohio, 1969.

Age	On Track*	Grades Behind					No Response	Total
		1	2	3	4	5		
5 & 6	12							12
7	8	4					1	13
8	8	2						10
9	9	3	2				1	15
10	9	1	4					14
11	9	4	3	1				17
12	8	8	3	2				21
13	9	6	6	1	2			24
14	4	6	3	0	1		1	15
15	5	7	1	2			1	16
16	8	2	2	2	2	1		17
17	3	3	1	5				12
18	5	2	0	1	0	1		10
19	0	3	1	2	0	1		7
20	0	0	0	0	0	1	—	1
Total	97	51	26	16	5	4	5	204

*Students within one grade or in the grade normally expected for their age.

TABLE 10.--Level of Education Attained for Those who Quit School Before Graduating From High School, By Age, 53 Migrant Children, Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, September 1969.*

Age	No Grade Completed	Last Grade Completed 2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	No Answer	Those Who Have Quit School	Total Number of Migrant Children	Percent of Children Who Are Dropouts+
11 & under											0	81	0
12				2							2	23	9
13											0	24	0
14				1							1	16	6
15					2	1					3	19	16
16			1	1	1		1				4	21	19
17			2			1	1	1			5	17	29
18				1	2	2	1	2			8	18	44
19			2			1			2		5	12	42
20	1		1		1	1	1	1			6	7	86
21							2	2			4	4	100
22			1			2	1	1			5	5	100
23			1				1		1		3	3	100
24			1	1						1	3	3	100
25 & over		2		1	1						4	4	100
Total	1	2	9	7	7	8	8	7	3	1	53	257	21

*The data relates grade level completed and present age of the child, not the age at which the child dropped out of school.
+Those age 5 listed in these columns have not yet started school and thus are not dropouts.

Of the 53 children who had dropped out of school, 23 percent had completed four or fewer grades, 26 percent had completed five or six grades, 30 percent had completed seven or eight grades, and 21 percent had completed nine or more grades. Thus nearly 80 percent of those quitting school had done so before reaching the ninth grade (Table 10).

Comparison of Parents' and Children's Levels of Education

The migrants interviewed generally had less education than their children. The heads of household were classified by the number of grades of school they had completed (Table 11). The children were then grouped on the basis of the education of the head of household. It is encouraging that there was relatively little variation in percent of children in school for the various groups.

For the first three groups, there was little variation in percent of students "on track." For the children still in school, there is no way of knowing how their level of education will compare with their fathers' at the end of their formal schooling. However, the clear indication is that these children are in the process of attaining a higher level of education than the heads of household.

Examination of the educational levels of those who quit school is also helpful (Table 12). Of the 20 percent who had quit school, only 9 percent had attained an education category lower than their fathers. Nineteen percent were in the same bracket as their fathers, but 70 percent were in a higher bracket than their fathers. In Table 12, the shaded area shows the number who quit school having attained the same bracket as their fathers. Those to the left and below the shaded area were in a lower bracket when they quit and those to the right and above were in a higher bracket.

Parents' Satisfaction with Schooling

When asked if they were satisfied with the schooling their children were receiving, all of the migrant heads of household with children of school age answered affirmatively. When asked to judge in which schools they thought their children were getting the better education, 58 percent of the migrant parents answering saw no difference between the Ohio schools and their home schools, 18 percent felt that the Ohio schools were probably better, and 24 percent felt their home schools were probably better.

Special Summer Classes

Parents of 14 percent of the children said summer classes were offered for their children. Of the 14 percent, 87 percent said their children attended regularly, 9 percent said their children attended irregularly, and 4 percent said their children did not attend. The parents of 79 percent of the children said either classes were not offered or they did not know they were offered for their children. The question did not apply to the parents of 7 percent of the children based on the children's ages.

Parents of 32 percent of the children said they approved of summer classes being offered for their children. Fifty-six percent said they did not see the usefulness of summer classes and would not send their children even if classes were offered. The question did not apply to the balance of the parents due to the age of their children.

TABLE 11.--Children's Educational Levels, By Levels of Education of Heads of Household, Putnam and Sandusky Counties, Ohio, 1969.

Grade Completed by Head of Household	Total	Children in School			Children Who Quit School		High School Graduates	
		Number	Percent	Percent On Track	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	65	48	74	49	12	18	5	8
1 - 3	70	56	80	44	13	19	1	1
4 - 6	110	87	79	46	22	20	1	1
7 - 8	9	5	56	80	4	44	0	0
9 +	10	8	80	75	2	20	0	0
Total	264	204	77	48	53	20	7	3

TABLE 12.--Grade Level Completed By Children Who Quit School In Comparison to Grade Level Completed By Head of Household, Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, 1969.

Grade Completed by Head of Household	Total Who Quit	Child's Last Grade Completed Before Quitting School					
		No Answer	None	1-3	4-6	7-8	9+
None	12	0	1	0	9	2	0
1 - 3	13	1	0	0	5	5	2
4 - 6	22	0	0	2	7	7	6
7 - 8	4	0	0	0	2	1	1
9 +	2	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	53	1	1	2	23	16	10

GROWER-EMPLOYER VIEWS RELATED TO MIGRANT LABOR

The 29 employers of the 69 migrant families discussed previously were interviewed in January 1970. In addition to collection of wage data, the interviews provided an opportunity to determine grower views concerning several migrant labor issues.

Opportunities for Assistance to Migrants by Local Community Groups

Two major points were made by growers. One was that there is an opportunity for adult migrant education concerning the "proper use" of money and sanitation practices. A second major point made by growers was that many church groups were involved in the migrant question without really understanding the migrant and his situation. About half of the growers interviewed felt that the church and clergy should confine their involvement with migrants to providing spiritual and counseling services. Another point made by a lesser number of growers was that migrants want work--not handouts. Some said help should be on an individual basis since need for assistance varies from migrant to migrant.

An additional consideration is an increased level of community assistance. Thirty-eight percent of the growers interviewed saw opportunities for local community organizations to be of more assistance to the migrants. Sixty-two percent did not see such opportunities.

Education of Migrant Children and Local Schools

Forty-eight percent of the growers felt that providing public education for migrant children did not present a major problem for the local schools. Forty-five percent felt it did and 7 percent were undecided. Although there was considerable variation among school districts, it was generally felt that providing education for these children did not result in a serious drain of local resources. The matter of overcrowded buses was mentioned most frequently. Other problems mentioned by a small number of respondents were the overcrowding of school rooms, lack of proper care of school facilities, and language barriers.

Reasonableness of Housing Regulations

Nearly 70 percent of the growers interviewed felt housing regulations were generally acceptable. Thirty-one percent of the growers felt the regulations were unreasonable, 24 percent felt they were reasonable, and 45 percent felt they were generally acceptable but had objections to some specific requirements. The most frequently mentioned specific objection was the amount of window space required per adult.

Quality of Housing

Seventeen percent of the growers interviewed considered the housing they provided for their workers to be very good, 79 percent considered it to be adequate, and 4 percent felt it was inadequate. It is interesting to note that the migrant heads of household evaluated the housing provided them in a similar manner. Ninety-six percent of the housing was inspected and approved by county health officials in 1969.

Mechanical Harvesting

In response to the question, Do you plan to pick tomatoes mechanically within the next three years?, 31 percent of the growers said no, 38 percent did not know, and 31 percent said yes. Of those who expressed interest in mechanical harvesting, a larger number were interested in buying in partnership than in either sole ownership, leasing, or custom hiring.

Stated advantages of the harvester were increased labor efficiency, lower harvesting cost per ton, and fewer labor management problems. Disadvantages mentioned were harvesting problems due to inclement weather, lack of varieties which would ripen uniformly, and high initial cost.

Sources of Migrant Labor

The most important methods by which the 29 growers obtained migrant labor were the return of previous workers and contacts with friends and relatives of previous workers. Mentioned with less frequency were prospective employees visiting the farm to obtain work, help from the processing companies, and personal visits to Texas to recruit workers.

Future Labor Needs

Sixty-six percent of the growers indicated that their migrant labor needs in coming years would be about the same as in 1969, 7 percent felt they would need more labor, and 27 percent felt they would probably use less.

The growers were asked to identify the factors which would influence their acreage of tomatoes in the next three years. The price of tomatoes was considered the most important factor and the cost of labor the second most important. Other factors listed in the frequency with which they were mentioned were the supply of migrant laborers, unionization of the migrants, and acreage limitations in processor contracts.

SUMMARY

This study was conducted to provide basic economic and sociological information for a sample of Spanish-American or Chicano migrant heads of household. These migrants were employed in the hand harvesting of processing tomatoes in northwestern Ohio in 1969. More specifically, the authors investigated migrant earnings, sociological profile data, migrant opinions on various issues, education of migrant children, and some grower views concerning migrant labor issues. Sixty-nine migrant heads of household and 29 growers in Sandusky and Putnam counties were included in the study. These 29 growers were selected from lists provided by the county agricultural extension agents in the two counties. These growers were considered typical of the processing tomato producers by these agents. This sampling procedure may have resulted in some biasing of the sample toward growers relatively well known to the agents.

Approximately half of the heads of household were between 35 and 54 years of age. About one-fourth of those interviewed had not completed the first grade and half had not completed the fourth grade. Most desired additional training to prepare themselves for other types of work. More than half of the migrants

interviewed had five or more children living at home. Most families were from the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. Nearly half did only farm work during the year. While 70 percent had been migrants for 5 years or more, most had not been coming to Ohio that long. Nearly all were Roman Catholics, but their level of participation in religious activities in Ohio was very low.

Migrant farm wages were estimated from information obtained from both migrants and growers. Wage estimates A and B are based on data from employer interviews and estimates C and D on data from migrant interviews. Estimate A is from records of those employers who had complete data for individual migrant families. These records were available on 35 percent of the migrants surveyed. Estimate D is from interviews with the 35 percent of the migrants whose employers had the complete data. Estimate B and C are based on all available grower and migrant data, respectively. There were substantial but not surprising variations in the estimates. Average wages per family per week for the season employed in Ohio were $276 for estimate A, $236 for estimate B, $135 for estimate C, and $188 for estimate D. Average weekly wages per adult equivalent worker for the season were $82 for estimate A, $80 for estimate B, $47 for estimate C, and $56 for estimate D. Migrant workers also commonly received housing, utilities, Social Security, and Workmen's Compensation coverage as non-wage benefits from their farmer employers.

The majority of the migrants interviewed felt the housing provided them was satisfactory. Less than half reported they could find year around employment in their home area. More than one-third felt their income was sufficient for their needs, and more than half planned to continue working as migrants as long as possible. About one-third expressed some interest in becoming permanent residents of Ohio. Nearly all cited economic reasons for coming to Ohio as migrants. Nearly 90 percent said they had been well treated by their employers. More than half thought machines would replace them in the next two to six years.

During 1969, half of those interviewed or some member of their family had received help from migrant health clinics. More than one-fifth of the families had a member hospitalized during 1969. Nearly all of those interviewed had been helped personally or knew of others who had been helped by government and community groups, especially the Food Stamp Program and church groups. Migrants expressed a desire for life and/or health insurance policies and guaranteed year around work.

Few migrant children dropped out of school before they were 16. However, of those in school, nearly 50 percent were more than 1 year behind the expected grade level for their age. There was no apparent relationship between the level of education of the head of household and the percentage of children of school age actually enrolled in school. Most of the children who had quit school had completed more formal education than their heads of household. All heads of household were satisfied with the schooling of their children. More than half of those interviewed did not believe summer classes for their children were useful.

Thirty-eight percent of the growers interviewed saw opportunities for local community organizations to be of additional assistance to migrants. Many growers felt that migrants needed to learn more about personal financial management and sanitation. Half of the growers felt that providing free public education did not present a major problem for the local schools. About half of the growers

felt the regulations for migrant housing generally were acceptable, but they had objections to a few specific requirements. Most growers thought their present housing for the migrants was adequate. Less than one-third felt they would definitely change to mechanical tomato harvesting within the next 3 years. Two-thirds of the growers felt that their future labor needs would remain about constant. Contacts with previous workers were the growers' major means of learning about and hiring migrants.

IMPLICATIONS

There was little evidence that the migrants interviewed consider themselves to be in poverty. More than one-third felt that their income was adequate and only 12 percent felt it was insufficient. The apparent contradiction between the relatively low levels of income and migrant attitudes toward their income levels may be due to a difference in referent groups. By the economic and social standards of their family and community referent groups, most migrants were reasonably well satisfied with their earnings, housing, fringe benefits, working conditions, and government services available to them in Ohio. However, from the point of income distribution and income relative to other laborers, such as manufacturing production workers, there is cause for concern by those working to improve the migrant income situation.

A structure which provides more employment will be necessary if migrant earnings are to increase substantially. However, the technical changes occurring in the production of processing tomatoes and other speciality crops will likely reduce migrant employment. Considering the migrants' low levels of formal education and English language capability, alternative employment opportunities are limited. However, it should be noted that 81 percent of the migrants interviewed would like additional training to prepare for other types of work.

A high percentage of migrant families had at least one member hospitalized during the 1969 migrant season. With this high incidence of hospitalization and the low income levels, some migrants quite expectedly desired more insurance coverage. Although extending existing group health insurance programs to migrants would not be easy, the provision of such insurance would alleviate some worker concerns and benefit numerous migrants.

There are some encouraging signs concerning education of migrant children. There is increased emphasis on education which is reflected in greater participation in formal schooling. There is a clear indication that migrant children are receiving considerably more education than their parents. However, more than 50 percent of those in school were more than 1 year behind their grade level. Perhaps more important than years of schooling is the extent to which education prepares the migrant for taking advantage of new opportunities which may be available. Increased emphasis on vocational education, language skills, and other programs which facilitate the migrant entering into year around agricultural and non-agricultural employment may well be in order.

From the interviews with growers, it is apparent that in some cases mechanical harvesting of tomatoes and cucumbers for processing is a feasible alternative to hand harvesting. If migrant wage rates for hand harvesting increase significantly above current levels, there is likely to be increased mechanical harvesting and a considerable decrease in migrant employment. Growers who are at

a point where they need to construct or remodel migrant housing, and those with relatively serious recruitment and labor relations problems are also likely to decrease migrant employment. However, it should be noted that factors other than labor may also affect a move toward mechanization. One example would be the availability of crop varieties more adaptable to machine harvest. Little local seasonal labor is used for hand harvesting tomatoes but it may become quite common with mechanical harvesting.

APPENDIX A.--Migrant Farm Wages, Means and Standard Deviations, Sandusky and Putnam Counties, Ohio, 1969.

Item		Wage Estimates*			
		A	B	C	D
Total farm wages per family in Ohio:	mean	$2,862.96	$3,170.75	$1,856.27	$1,934.58
	standard deviation	1,675	2,162	1,179	1,235
Number of adult equivalent worker per family:	mean	3.26	2.99	2.91	3.26
	standard deviation	1.45	1.42	1.44	1.45
Number of weeks employed per family:	mean	10.38	13.42	13.73	10.38
	standard deviation	4.68	6.04	5.85	4.68
Wages per family per week:	mean	$275.82	$236.27	$135.20	$188.28
	standard deviation	71.39	125.87	85.36	68.97
Total wages per adult equivalent worker:	mean	878.20	1,060.45	637.89	593.42
	standard deviation	876.46	1,053.78	633.03	592.26
Weekly wages per adult equivalent worker:	mean	82.48	79.71	47.27	55.74
	standard deviation	31.91	35.79	44.99	44.62

*The means given are identical to those in Table 6. Wage estimates A and B are based on data from employer interviews and estimates C and D on data from migrant interviews. Estimate A is from records of those employers who had complete data for individual migrant families. These records were available on 35 percent of the migrants surveyed. Estimate D is from interviews with the 35 percent of the migrants whose employers had complete data. Estimates B and C are based on all available growers and migrant data, respectively.